What Every Vietnam Veteran Knows *Philip S. Balboni*

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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A Journal of Politics and the Arts — December 19, 1970, 50 cents

War Guilt

Doubts that a massacre of women and children did take place at Mylai have disappeared. It happened, as it happened at Babi Yar in Poland during World War II, when carloads of people were sprayed with machine gun fire and dumped into a ravine. Who was responsible for these monstrous acts, then and now? Nominally, only Lt. William L. Calley has been on trial at Fort Benning, Georgia, charged with murdering 102 inhabitants at a ditch in Vietnam. But guilt cannot be so exclusively conceived, or expiated. The executioners at Babi Yar – German soldiers and a few of their Ukrainian allies – did their duty as Authority defined duty, and perhaps Lt. Calley feels that he did his. German authority decreed that for the well-being of the Reich, "Yids," gypsies and sundry other unassimilable types had to be liquidated. And thousands of young Americans were ordered to Vietnam to "search and destroy," because their President told them "it is better [to fight in Vietnam] than in Honolulu"; and their Vice President, Mr. Humphrey, assured them that their mission was "morally right." They found, when they got there, that they were not up against any (Continued on page 5)

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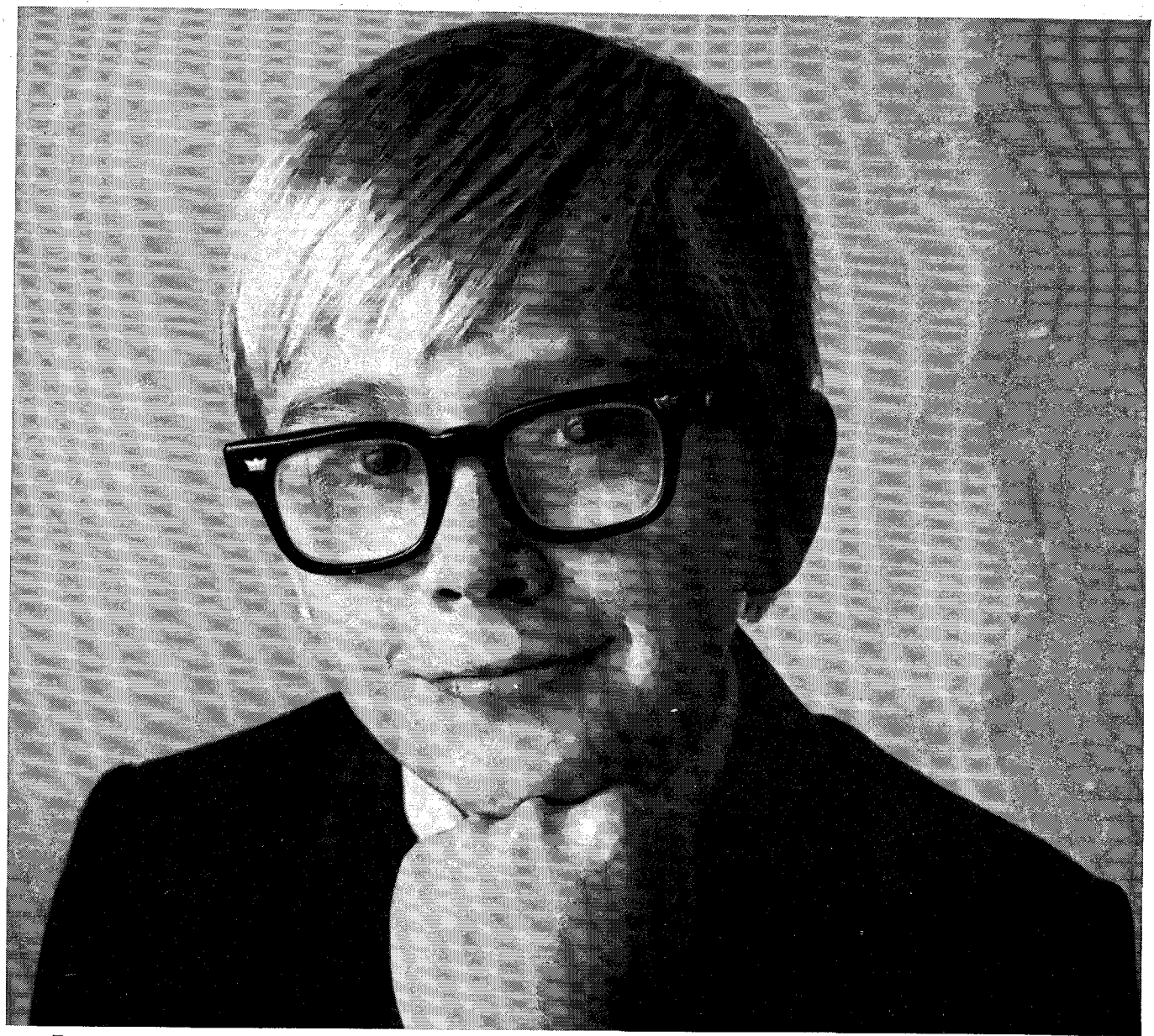

Glen Conway just gave birth to an eight-year-old.

It's true. And the whole Conway family is delighted. Glen knows about helping because his dad is a policeman and helps people all the time. So when Glen heard about Save the Children Federation in school, he wanted to do something. His parents decided it would, indeed, be wonderful to sponsor a child. To give their eleven-year-old a chance to learn how children in other countries, children less fortunate than their son, must fight for survival. And that's how Antonio Laverde came into their lives.

Glen and Antonio are separated by a lot more than the miles between Long Island and Colombia. Antonio lives in one room. With eight brothers and sisters. Soup made with potatoes and roots is his main meal. You see, his dad only has the use of one arm. And even though he works long hours at odd jobs, he still earns just five dollars a week.

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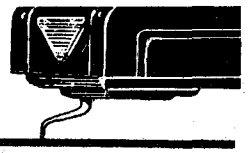

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from Washington

News Addiction

It was snowing outside in Minneapolis and bitterly cold and we decided to open the interior storm window just a crack. Next morning there were five inches of snow and it was white and lovely and frigid with every bush a Christmas tree.

In Washington the snow would have stopped traffic, for you can disrupt Pennsylvania Avenue by spitting on it. But here the natives hardly seemed to know they had difficulties. Main highways cleared immediately. For someone from the South, weather was only the first challenge.

We were in a pre-Christmas family gathering in the midst of which my weakness struck; like a drug addict I require enormous dosages of fresh news all the time, with excruciating withdrawal symptoms.

It struck me once before on a Caribbean cruise where the only news was a one-page summary grabbed by Marconi from the UP by an illiterate purser and pushed under the cabin door. Five separate world crises were progressing simultaneously, summarized pungently in one sentence along with the winner of yesterday's bingo game. News addicts should not take pleasure cruises.

My addiction has reached terminal stages; I read the *Congressional Record.* Can man sink lower? The Minneapolis *Tribune,* everyone agrees, is a fine, clean morning paper, published along with the evening *Star* from the same plant, with separate editorial policies, and both owned by Cowles. The *Tribune* offers copyright *NY Times* news stories, mostly cut off at the critical juncture with the vital details omitted. National and international events are summarized in paragraphs or omitted. The sporting section is good. It is a torture for the addict that the unhooked natives cannot comprehend. Worst of all is to know that here, as in most cities, the precious news is unrolling off AP and UPI tickers in the composing room, but cut off from the public as sharply as a cardiac stoppage.

The family reunion went happily. Children and pets surged underneath. The house was surrounded by male dogs that gave yearning calls during the day and part of the night. Large unknown dogs materialized mysteriously out of the white smother like Nanook of the North. One strange dog somehow got into the house. Our magnificent German shepherd seemed oblivious but an unexpected thing happened to the cat. I had supposed her soft, supple and timorous. How we misjudge life! She sprang at the intruder like a demon out of hell, twice her natural size. I could not have been more stunned if a goldfish from the motor-thumping aquarium had hopped out and bit me.

This was no simple leap; Fluffy spread-eagled at the embarrassed stranger, fangs bared, claws spread and uttering a horrid yowl. The dog, unsure of its social position anyway, retreated to the kitchen. This would have satisfied any normal cat left undisputed on the field of honor. Not Fluffy. Its territorial imperative had been breached. It rushed into the kitchen with another murderous assault like Nixon jumping at somebody's jugular. The dog, no coward, but embarrassed as a man trapped in a ladies' room, snapped back, and was peremptorily ejected by all hands. Five minutes later Fluff was cuddled into the thick hide of its friend, the unperturbed shepherd.

The dog, I regret to report, was shortly thereafter exiled to a kennel, poor thing; guilty of nothing but its sex, a plain case for a Canine Women's Lib.

Meanwhile, with taut nerves, I tried the radio. At home I have a small radio set in every room, all tuned to the same station, WTOP, the CBS all-news station. There were dozens of stations here, all right; all giving out football, jazz, weather and advertising. Now and then there would be small artifacts of news – Vietnam, Nixon, the economy. Then more football. They gushed salt water to a man dying of thirst.

That evening, round the fire, somebody mentioned a friend recently rushed to a hospital; given a month's care, then surgery, and saved by the finest medical skill after six weeks with a discharge bill of $21,000 at the end. A disaster! "Why don't they start health insurance in Washington?" they asked. All eyes turned on me.

It's the cost, I stammered; we can afford Vietnam costing $15 to $30 billion a year, but not health. Senators Mondale and McGovern have shown again and again that tens of thousands of poor children never see a dentist. Every industrial nation but the US has health insurance: we can't afford it. America ranks seventh among all modern countries in percentage of mothers who die in childbirth; twelfth in infant mortality; eighteenth in the life-expectancy of males. More depressing than this – the US is sinking backward; we were better off in every one of these categories 15 or 20 years ago.

Now even the American Medical Association has come around to some kind of national system. A preliminary bill to insure against catastrophic illnesses has recently been introduced; something should be done soon. But why is the US always last? I pondered on it as the plane took me back to Washington. One reason is that we have one of the most inefficient governments on earth.

The new fiscal year is five months old but last week five of the government's main appropriation bills due June 30, were still not passed.

Our legislative system with its built-in vetoes, seniority and filibusters is incredible. Last week it produced that ultimate Congressional monster, a four-headed welfare – trade – social-security – health Siamese-quadruplets bill, all in one. They could not pass them in time separately so they tried to bunch them together. How can one countenance such shiftlessness. Or again, workers of Boeing bewail the possible loss of 150,000 jobs by the threat to the SST, when at the same time we need 26 million new homes in the next 10 years, that would keep the economy humming for a generation.

"Fasten Seat Belts" said the sign. Washington rose up at us. No snow. There was the Monument like a shining needle, and the great Capitol dome, and the mild and mellow city. I love it. But even a brief absence makes one wonder. Here is a city that is supposed to direct a nation – most of whose citizens seem far ahead of it! Washington, the strange capital, stuffed with ideas whose time has come (and gone) 20 years before.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC *A Journal of Politics and the Arts, Vol. 163, No. 25, Issue 2921, December 19, 1970. Published weekly (48 issues a year) and distributed by* The New Republic, *1244 19th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Phone FEderal 8-2494. Single copy 50c. Yearly subscription $12; Foreign $13; Armed Forces personnel or students, $6; Send all remittances and correspondence about subscriptions, undelivered copies, and changes of address to Subscription Department,* The New Republic, *381 West Center Street, Marion, Ohio 43302.* *Copyright© 1970 by Harrison-Blaine of New Jersey, Inc.* *Item g. Second Class Postage Paid at Washington, D. C. Indexed in Readers' Guide.*

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War Guilt

kind of army they had seen on television or read of in books. A child might be an enemy courier, an old woman might betray them, and they had their own lives to save. They could dismiss the official platitudes about freedom, for they saw little of that around them. Still, they were there to fight. So they fought, and as the war dragged on in the jungles or above them, fine discriminations faded. The pilot did not ask, could not know, how many "innocents," how many villages, livelihoods, crops or animals he might be destroying. If the burning and bombing and poisoning came to seem senseless, even sickening, he might come to loathe his assignment, or even loathe that Higher Authority which transformed people into body counts, but he could not quit, except at the price of his liberty and his acceptance by his peers as a good citizen. And if he sought to excuse himself by blaming others, whom should he blame?

On June 6, 1945, Justice Robert H. Jackson placed before President Truman a document which "set the keynote for our policy" in prosecuting German war criminals at Nuremberg. It declared that the United States would not recognize as a legitimate defense "the obsolete doctrine that a head of state is immune from legal liability. . . . We don't accept the paradox that legal responsibility should be the least where power is the greatest." It said that "our case against the major defendants is concerned with the Nazi master plan, not with individual barbarities and perversions which occurred independently of any central plan." The correctness of this policy was subsequently accepted by one of the Nuremberg defendants, Albert Speer, Minister of Armaments and War Production under Hitler, who was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment. "I assumed responsibility for all the orders from Hitler which I carried out," he later wrote. "I took the position that in every government, orders must remain orders for the subordinate organs of the government; but that the leadership on all levels must examine and weigh the orders it receives and is consequently co-responsible for them, even if the orders have been carried out under duress." And at his trial, Speer made the following statement: "In political life there is a responsibility for a man's own sector. For that he is of course fully responsible. But beyond that there is a collective responsibility, and he has

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been one of the leaders. Who else is to be held responsible for the course of events, if not the closest associates around the Chief of State? But this collective responsibility can only apply to fundamental matters, and not to details."

If we apply this concept of collective responsibility to the American assault in and on Vietnam, and to the horrors it has produced, of which Mylai and the incidents described by veterans in Mr. Balboni's article (page 13) are only a sample, what do we conclude? At Nuremberg, the victors judged the vanquished and found them guilty. In Vietnam, there will be no surrender document, certainly no trial of American leaders by the Vietcong, Hanoi, or the surviving villagers of Mylai. So we must be our own judges and our own witnesses. There need be no stampede to claim a share of the blame; there's enough for all. A broad, bipartisan consensus, in the Executive and in Congress, made and sustained the decision to fight a conventional war that has battered friend, foe and neutral alike, and to win it by overwhelming firepower.

But can it not be argued that since in a democracy power comes from the people, leaders mislead only by consent of the ruled, and that the American people as represented most directly by their legislators supported this war from the start? Those are fair and terrible questions; in the widest sense, we *are* all complicit. But it is also fair to note that the people have been taken into camp, but not into the confidence of the leaders. There has been misrepresentation on two levels: how the war was going, and why it needed to be fought. The second question towers above the first in importance, but we must deal with the first question if only to guard against further fraud.

On May 11, 1966, Secretary of Defense McNamara reported that the bombing of the North had had a "noticeably adverse effect on Vietcong morale and expectation of victory. . . . It appears that the Vietcong is losing support it had from the rural population." Six weeks later, President Johnson added that "in the past 15 months our actions and those of our fighting allies . . . have already begun to turn the tide." By the end of the year, the Secretary of the Air Force, Harold Brown, was reporting that bombardment of the North had caused "serious manpower, supply and morale problems" for North Vietnam: US planes had destroyed or damaged more than 7000 trucks since the start of the raids, 3000 railway cars, 5000 bridges and 5000 barges and boats; destroyed more than two-thirds of North Vietnam's oil storage supplies, and most of its ammunition storage and explosive plants. General Westmoreland found the situation "very, very encouraging" in November.

By the beginning of '68 and after repeated massive bombings, including strikes at power plants at Haiphong, at Hanoi itself, and in the Demilitarized Zone, we were no nearer victory. But we were assured by the new Secretary of Defense, Clark Clifford, that "our successful presence there has many times justified the cost to us in our own men and in our treasure." At the end of May, the Communists were "approaching a point of desperation," as their forces were "deteriorating in strength and quality" (General Westmoreland). And by mid-November, Lt. General Lewis W. Walt was calculating that the enemy had suffered a "real defeat," having lost an estimated 40,000 out of 60,000 troops. "The prospects for peace," Lyndon Johnson forecast in his final message to the Congress, January 14, 1969, were "better today" than at any time in the preceding four years. And the incoming President did not doubt it; this war, Mr. Nixon said, was "one of America's finest hours." White House sources informed newsmen shortly before Thanksgiving, 1969, that the President believed he could get us out of Vietnam honorably, "if the people stick with him four to six months." Three months earlier Mr. Laird had announced that "we've certainly turned the corner."

Many more lives have been lost since, many more claims have been made, but the situation remains about the same. And the real tragedy is that if the truth about the progress of the war had been told from the start, it would not have been the deepest truth. For the critical error has not been faulty forecasting, but our evasion of the core question: was this war necessary?

Yes, the public was told, for Vietnam is an extension of, is inseparable from, the cold war against Communist expansionism; and in the global game of power politics, the direction the Vietnam domino falls would decide whether or not America survived as a World Power. That assumption has been matched in its mindlessness only by the frequency of its repetition. And Mr. Nixon has managed to reduce the assumption to an obscenity by comparing the war to a football game.

The price that has been paid for that fundamental misunderstanding of necessity – in money and misery – cannot be tallied, as in a bookkeeping ledger. For there is an unaccounted, deferred payment to be met, and that is the psychological, the moral damage that has been done. "The children's teeth are set on edge." We don't know in what frame of mind and spirit the veterans of Vietnam will return. We don't know how bitter they will be because of what they have seen and done and been told, how betrayed they will feel when at long last it is evident that a policy of withdrawal (partial) *and* victory is a ruse. We can only guess that a reckoning is still to come.

These are not wounds that soft soap can heal. There will be an impulse to blame, perhaps punish. And the whole weight of guilt will not fall on a few Lieutenant Calleys. It is possible, though painful, to learn from mistakes – if we know what they are and are unafraid to put them into words. We have been wrong, and the leaders of both parties are collectively responsible; on that they are to be judged.

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Advise and Consent

Foreign policy must take precedence in the White House. It must also take precedence in this Senate. The only safe way to grant the necessary priority in foreign policy is to restore bipartisanship, not on a political party basis alone but between the branches of Government before decisions are made. That, in turn means restoring the habit of consultation between the White House and the Congress, for only consultation gives substance to the idea of bipartisanship.

– Senator George Aiken

President Nixon has an opportunity to do what Senator Aiken wants by supporting, or at least not opposing, Sen. Clifford Case's proposal to formally require the executive branch to tell Congress about all international agreements within 60 days of making them. It's an old idea, originating with Republicans in the Eisenhower administration but never enacted. Treaties, of course, must be ratified by the Senate. And existing law requires the Secretary of State to make an annual accounting to Congress of agreements which the administration chooses not to call treaties.

But that law is honored in the breach, usually on the grounds that national security considerations preclude public disclosure. In practice this means the President can make secret promises of military and other support without any congressional oversight or public debate. If we ever learn of them at all it's often too late to do anything to affect policy. Senator Stuart Symington's Foreign Relations Subcommittee on US Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad has provided a number of examples of once-secret pacts that make the case for Case – a 1966 contingency plan under which US troops would help Thailand repel a North Vietnamese attack launched from Laos, a quid-pro-quo agreement with Korea involving military aid for the Koreans in exchange for Korean troops in Vietnam, military aid to Ethiopia in return for a base.

As Senator Aiken said in his Senate speech November 24, the Vietnam war is itself the prime example of failure of consultation between the President and Congress. In 1965, "the aim of preventing defeat in Vietnam was replaced by the aim of military victory – and the great escalation started, without consultation with the Senate." Aiken, senior Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee, generally supports Nixon. He believes, naively in our judgment, that "if there is discontent in the Senate over the conduct of foreign policy, it is because President Nixon has not yet restored the habit of consultation that lapsed during earlier years." (Aiken says he might even have supported the invasion of Cambodia if only he'd known about it in advance.)

The legislation revived by Senator Case was originally introduced in 1954 by the conservative Republican Sen. William F. Knowland with the support of the State Department. It differed from Case's proposal in that it would have forced disclosure to senators, but not representatives. The Case bill would require the Secretary of State to send Congress transcripts of all agreements as soon as possible, but in no event later than 60 days after they've been completed. In those cases where public disclosure would be, in the President's opinion, "prejudicial to the national security," the texts of agreements would go to the Senate Foreign Relations and House Foreign Affairs Committee and be protected by "an appropriate injunction of secrecy to be removed only upon due notice from the President." The Members under such circumstances would know but couldn't tell. For a branch of government whose function is to advise and consent, that's preferable to not knowing at all.

It's too early to tell from where support for Case will come. Soundings are being made at the State Department and the White House. On the Foreign Relations Committee all but perhaps hawkish Sen. Gale McGee are likely to be receptive. Senator Aiken hasn't yet said he'll go along, though failing to do so would seem to contradict his views on consultation. Senator Fulbright, a private supporter, has been publicly silent, as has Senator Symington, whose only move so far was to insert in the *Congressional Record* a newspaper report explaining the Case bill.

"Pull Over!"

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Holdup

You may not read these words, at least this week, because as of this writing, it's not known whether the Post Office will accept them for mailing. A national rail strike affecting 400,000 workers and nearly all passenger and freight service resulted, among other things, in an embargo on second-class mail effective at 4:00 PM Wednesday, December 9. Since this journal is printed and mailed on Fridays, our fate rests with the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks and other striking railroad employees who at this moment are ignoring the 81-day strike moratorium (coupled with a 13.5 percent wage increase) hastily passed and signed into law early Thursday morning.

The news magazines are only a minor casualty. The real injury is to perishable foods, passenger travel (in New York the taxis are on strike too) and to essential commerce. The illegal strike can't go on for long. But the spiral of grab-and-greed price rises and labor demands will continue. It's hard to blame the railroad clerks, who have not had a raise in 18 months, whose last raises in January and July 1969 were three and two percent, and who have been kept from striking for a year. Are they less deserving than auto workers? Are their interests less compelling than the shareholders of Ford, who benefit from the third increase in car prices this year? It's impractical to ask one group to be self-denying when others are allowed to go their way. In a crisis the President talks tough – to the wage earners. But where is his firmness when it comes to laying an effective, and fair, wage and price policy?

Living Room

HUD Secretary George Romney was keen on federally supported "new towns," until he was told to forget it, they'd cost too much. Nevertheless, the Senate did include in the Housing bill it passed this year provisions for federal assistance to new towns – guaranteeing loans for the construction of housing and community facilities, helping localities and private developers acquire land. In addition, the Senate voted to pump an additional $2.8 billion over three years into existing programs, including urban renewal, and to underwrite insurance for property owners in high crime areas where private insurance is hard to get.

The House on December 3 went along with most of this, but it cut out all the investment in new towns. Differences in the House and Senate bills will be reconciled in conference. Regardless of the compromise reached, no one can be sure that the legislation will bestow its intended benefits, for no money has actually been appropriated, only authorized. The Appropriations Committees have yet to decide how much can actually be spent, and it's usually less than the amount previously authorized by the Congress.

The most striking feature of the House bill is the absence of any striking features. Like most previous legislation, it was written as if the problem of bad housing were primarily one of deficient structures and physical decay. The facts do not support such an interpretation. For example, two-thirds of the people officially classified as poor in 1966 lived in housing deemed structurally sound. Bad housing is intertwined with poor schools, high crime rates, inadequate transportation; in brief the whole community environment.

The history of Model Cities, the one federal program originally designed to assist both in construction of better buildings and improved services indicates that Congress is not yet willing to face the political and fiscal implications of this broader view. Intended as massive fiscal aid to a few cities, Model Cities has been spread so thin and the amount of aid per city so reduced that today $575 million is shared by over 150 cities, with little visible effect.

Both the Senate and House versions of the current bill continue another tradition – aiding some families and not others who are poorer. Funds have not gone to more than a small fraction of those eligible for aid on the basis of income. Low rent public housing reaches fewer than four percent of families with incomes under $3000 per year. Assistance is going predominantly to lower-middle and middle-class families, who can pay more of the cost.

Harold Wilson's Petard

Tories and the Unions

London

Mr. Heath's Conservative government has lost no time in tackling the issue which, perhaps more than any other, brought it victory six months ago. Its first piece of major legislation is an industrial relations bill – a package of reforms (the proposed statute runs to 150 clauses) altering the whole legal framework within which labor unions in Britain have traditionally operated. Once the bill goes through – and the government is clearing the decks to get it passed by the Commons by next April – unions as corporate entities and unionists as individuals will lose much of the immunity from suits for damages that they have enjoyed in Britain for more than half-a-century.

Such proposals were an integral part of the Conservatives' election manifesto, but that has not prevented

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them from being greeted with howls of outrage by the leaders of Britain's ten-million-strong organized labor force: "the most iniquitous piece of legislation ever to be proposed for the statute book," "a scaffold for the execution of the liberties of the working people." Mr. Heath and his colleagues have shown no sign of being perturbed by the hubbub. Nor need they be. For the truth is that the bill commands widespread public support – support that the power workers' slow-down, which is now blacking out large areas, has strengthened. More to the point, the bill has placed the parliamentary representatives of the nation's labor force in a very awkward predicament. Only 18 months ago Mr. Wilson's Labour government was, after all, bringing forward very similar, though not identical, proposals – proposals that it was later forced to drop because of union pressure. In announcing its outright opposition to the present Tory bill the Parliamentary Labour Party is courting (if not inviting) the charge of inconsistency.

Mr. Heath, who has been through some rough weather lately, is enjoying the opposition's discomfiture. Contrary to all expectations, the Prime Minister has let it be known that the bill will be taken through all its stages on the floor of the House of Commons – thus ensuring that the debate over it gets maximum public attention. Some of Mr. Wilson's colleagues are already detecting in this tactical ruse unmistakable evidence that the government has by no means given up on its long-suspected intention of calling a "snap" election on the theme "Shall Unions or Parliament Rule." They survey that prospect with something of the apprehension of a rabbit contemplating a stoat.

Of course any such election would in some measure be fraudulent. For, *pace* the extravagant protests it has produced, the bill is not a class-war measure – or anything like it. It in no way destroys the right of union leaders to call a strike – provided they take such action in the context of their own union rules and within whatever contractual arrangement they have made with the employers. The Tory government's target is, in effect, exactly the same as that of the Labour government 18 months ago – the unofficial, or wildcat stoppages that have become virtually a permanent hemorrhage weakening the country's economic performance. For such "irregular" action the legal penalties are certainly going to be stiff – up to $240,000 in damages for a union that breaks its agreements and damages of an unlimited amount against an individual unionist who incites his colleagues to come out on strike without any official backing. Ironically, the bill also includes the two provisions – for a cooling-off period before a strike can be called and a requirement in certain circumstances for a secret ballot to be held – that formed the most offensive part to the unions of the Labour government's proposals before they were dropped.

If, indeed, it is Mr. Heath and the Tories who now face the fury of the unions, it is Mr. Wilson and his opposition colleagues who are now threatened by their recriminations. The Tory bill has opened up all the old wounds Labour hoped had healed: as a kind of surety for their future good behaviour Mr. Wilson and his parliamentary leadership have already served notice that they will repeal the Tory bill lock-stock-and-barrel if they ever return to power – thus risking, and getting, the gibe from their own most powerful press supporter, the London *Daily Mirror:* "Unlike Mr. Wilson this newspaper has not changed its view just because Mr. Heath is now in 10 Downing Street."

But Mr. Wilson was not born yesterday. He must be presumed to know what he is doing. His general calculation probably runs something like this: that Mr. Heath, with his emphasis on "stand on your own feet" economics and his antagonism to "the lame ducks" of society, is already in danger of acquiring a reputation for doctrinaire extremism. Let his union reform proposals lead to even more industrial trouble than before – it is quite possible that they will – and the country eventually will turn again with relief to a flexible rather than a rigid political leader. Mr. Wilson would, no doubt, resent the comparison – but there is a sense in which he is showing signs of being ready to settle for becoming the Mayor Wagner of British politics.

Yet there is another imperative that dictates Mr. Wilson's attitude. The last Labour government did not go out of office primarily because the middle-class voted against it: it lost power after six years because when it came to polling-day the working-class (or large parts of it) chose to sit on its hands. Somehow or other Mr. Wilson has to reforge his party's alliance with its ordinary, wage-earning supporters. In fact he – far more than Mr. Heath – had cause to be alarmed by the national one-day strike that the more militant union activists tried to call on December 8 against the government's bill. If it had come off – luckily for Mr. Wilson it flopped – he would inevitably have come to look very like just another discredited French socialist leader of the Fourth Republic. He was saved from that fate, but the price he had to pay for his escape (a promise of outright opposition to the bill in the Commons combined with the public commitment to repeal it) may prove to be dangerously high.

For the moment at least the Conservatives hold all the cards. With a clear electoral mandate won less than six months ago, with a patent desire on the part of the public to find a scapegoat for all the country's troubles and with a union leadership that is rapidly proving that anyone who has it for a friend has no need of an enemy – he can hardly go wrong. In the end he may conclude that he does not even need to produce his ultimate trump – an election on the issue of union reform. The fact that he is known to hold that card in his hand is quite enough to give him a commanding advantage.

Anthony Howard

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The Nixon Watch

Blood on the Floor

All of a sudden last week, Mr. Nixon succumbed to a desire to have it believed that he was as zealous in support of his welfare bill as were the few senators, mostly liberal Democrats, who were trying to improve and save it. He told James Farmer, who had grown tired of being the Nixon Administration's most prominent black official and had called at the White House to quit his job as an assistant secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, to tell the press that the President had told him that "there will be blood on the floor" if Congress didn't pass an acceptable welfare bill. The President's staff lobbyists were telling him that what was left of his Family Assistance Plan had no better than a 50-50 chance of enactment in the last days of the 1970 session. If something reasonably like it was not enacted before adjournment, Nixon told Farmer to say for him, he would submit a revised version to the 92nd Congress and would personally lead the fight for it in 1971. His tepid leadership of the fight for the 1970 version accounted partly for the trouble it was in, and his talk about "blood on the floor" must have fascinated Republican senators who had been unaware of any compelling Presidential pressure to support it.

The original Nixon proposal was pretty much intact when the House of Representatives approved and sent it along to the Senate Finance Committee in May, 1970. The central features, the ones that justified the claim that it constituted a true advance in welfare practice, were a federal guarantee of a minimum income to dependent families with children, extension of supplemental federal assistance to families headed by "working poor" adults, and a start toward the substitution of uniform federal standards for the wide and discriminatory variations in state standards of need and support. The guaranteed minimum – $1000 a year for an adult and one child, $1600 for the commonly and somewhat deceptively cited "family of four" – was vulnerably low. But it was more than the poorest of the poor had to live on in much of the South and Appalachia. It could be and in most instances would be supplemented by a portion of earned wages and other income and by state payments. The Administration argued that most of the prospective 16 to 22 million benefitted individuals, including dependents of "the working poor," would be enabled to live at levels considerably above the basic minima. However insufficient the minimum and actual income levels were, the recognition of a federal obligation to provide assistance at *some* level was held to outweigh in importance the many objections that legitimately could be and were raised to the Nixon proposal. As the President made a great point of saying when he announced his program, it did not promise a "guaranteed income" to all Americans. But the principle of such a guarantee was implicit in it and the Nixon reform would have fared better than it did in the Senate committee if the President and his spokesmen had been courageous and honest enough to say so, instead of exaggerating the proportion of bums and loafers on welfare and promoting Family Assistance as a device to make them work and support themselves.

The opposition in the Finance Committee provided the best of all testimony that there was a lot of good in the program, despite the lengths to which the Administration went to minimize the good features and emphasize the bad ones in the misguided belief that liberal support could be taken for granted and that conservative support had to be won at any cost. The genuine reforms were simply too much for Russell Long of Louisiana, the chairman, and for five of the six Republicans on the committee. The same reforms were not enough for the liberal Democrats, among them Fred Harris of Oklahoma, Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota, Albert Gore of Tennessee, Vance Hartke of Indiana and Abe Ribicoff of Connecticut. Both elements, the conservatives and the initially passive liberals, figured in the hassles that stalled the program from May into December and finally moved the President to threaten "blood on the floor."

First to satisfy the committee conservatives, and then to meet some of the objections of both conservatives and liberals, the Administration revised its proposals in June and again in October, and once again in late November. The basic provisions of the original program and of the House version survived these maneuvers and, toward the end of the 1970 struggle, the legislation remaining to be accepted or rejected by the Senate – if it had or took the time to do anything at all about it – was stronger than it had been at the low point of the committee phase. The problem of legislative time apart, the outcome and the future of welfare reform turned upon a few substantive issues.

The basic level of guaranteed support was not really one of them, although it appeared to be. HEW Secretary Elliot Richardson agreed to accept, though not to recommend in a positive way, an increase in the symbolic family-of-four level from $1600 to $2200 by averaging out and paying in cash the value of food stamps that dependent families might otherwise receive, and to write into the legislation a higher goal to be aimed for by some unstated date. Even the aggressive and growing National Welfare Rights Organization, the only effective voice of welfare recipients, was prepared to settle for the goal instead of for the immediate $5500 it formally demanded, provided that the enacted legislation bound the federal government to meet the goal in a specified time. Other issues, going in essence to the relationship between citizens and their government, were actually more critical. One of

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these issues was the requirement that employable or trainable family heads register for "suitable" jobs or training and forfeit their (but not their children's) share of federal support if they refused to accept the training or jobs to which they were assigned. The only substantial exceptions to this requirement were the mothers of children less than six years old. Since a high proportion of wholly dependent families are headed by mothers, many of them black, the federal pledge to provide adequate day care for the affected children did very little to soften a requirement that was at once cruel and unlikely to diminish the welfare rolls nearly as much as its defenders assumed. Senator Ribicoff asked, and Secretary Richardson went some way toward agreeing, that this "workfare" for mothers of school-age children be modified. Senators Harris and McCarthy, encouraged by NWRO's insistent demand that no mother of school-age children be required to leave her home, called for its abolition.

The Administration proposed that employable adults be required to take any available and "suitable" job at "the prevailing wage." Senators Ribicoff, Harris and McCarthy among others, emphatically supported by NWRO, argued that welfare adults should be required to take jobs only if they paid the federal minimum wage of $1.60 or the locally prevailing wage, whichever was higher. This issue was the subject of an interesting exchange between Harris and White House Counsellor Daniel P. Moynihan, who had been billed (with some exaggeration) as the philosophical daddy of the Nixon program. Harris remarked to Moynihan that the question whether the national government should force any citizen to work for less than its own minimum wage went beyond economics and budgets, to the fundamentals of human rights. Moynihan exclaimed that he had never thought of it that way and, turning to HEW Under Secretary John Veneman, said, "Can't we do something about that, Jack?" The most the Administration could do about it, Secretary Richardson announced, was to accept a proviso that no recipient be made to work for less than $1.20 an hour, or three-fourths of the federal minimum. To require that welfare clients be paid at least the $1.60 minimum would be unfair, the Secretary said, to the seven million Americans not on welfare who work for less than that. Senator Harris and his allies were prepared to fight on the floor, in 1970 or later, for federal adherence to the federal minimum.

The budgetary bind that determined and limited many of the Administration positions on essentially human issues led Secretary Richardson to reject outright Senator Ribicoff's suggestion and Senator Harris's stronger insistence that the guaranteed federal payment rise with increases in cost-of-living indices. Throughout the welfare debate, the Administration had clung with desperate urgency to its stipulation that Family Assistance add no more than $4-billion-plus to the annual federal costs of public welfare. A mandatory cost-of-living trigger might initially add "as much as $400 million" to the anticipated expense, Secretary Richardson said, and that was more than the Administration would undertake.

The proposed approach to the imposition of uniform federal standards raised complex issues that were typical of the difficulties involved in any attempt to change a system as varied in its practices as state-administered welfare was bound to be. One such issue had to do with the special benefits – winter clothing for welfare children, furniture for under-furnished homes, emergency medical costs – that some states provide and some don't. NWRO and its senatorial friends, Harris and McCarthy among them, wanted to make certain that the effect of federal Family Assistance would not be to deprive present beneficiaries of any of these aids or of any part of the real income that they represented. The Administration argued with some reason that the principle of federally administered federal standards would in the end prove more important and beneficial than any forms of aid that might be temporarily lost, and that in any case the critics were assuming for tactical purposes that the worst that could happen was sure to happen. NWRO's formidable corps of lobbyists, mostly black and eloquent and amply proportioned ladies with children of their own and the strengths of actual experience with public welfare, and their executive director, a sometime professor of organic chemistry named George Wiley, asserted that the worst *was* certain to happen unless any new law specifically said that it was not to happen and the federal administrators were really determined that it shouldn't happen.

These arguments and many others complicated the situation that confronted Mr. Nixon and Congress at the close of what the President had intended to be his year for his version of welfare reform. His program, tattered at the edges but more nearly intact than it had seemed likely to be after six months of the Senate committee's capricious treatment of it, was neither the "gigantic fraud" that its extreme critics called it nor the sufficient reform that the President made it out to be in his equivocal and often misleading fashion. It was worth fighting for and saving, with all of its deficiencies, and the senators fighting for it most effectively in December were such committee liberals as Harris and Ribicoff. The sole Republican on the Finance Committee who was of any real help continued to be Wallace Bennett of Utah. The committee record since May should have taught Mr. Nixon, but probably hadn't, that he would do well to turn from his conservative friends to the moderates and liberals in his own party and among the Democrats, if he were called upon in 1971 to exercise the personal leadership that he promised late in the welfare game.

John Osborne

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The Remarkable Mr. Riles

Piedmont, Calif.

"Utterly fantastic! Probably the single most extraordinary outcome of the election this year in California." The state Democratic Party chairman, Roger Boas, was talking about the election to statewide office of a black man without organization ties, without advance financial backing, without a political base; a name and face unknown to the voters until a few months ago. Yet Wilson C. Riles won the nonpartisan office of state superintendent of instruction with over three million votes, almost a half-million plurality over his well-identified opponent, the conservative two-term incumbent, Max Rafferty. Ability, not color, mattered to the voters.

Busing, Riles said, is a false issue. Top quality education for all is the real issue. Integration should be achieved wherever feasible, "but I reject the concept that a black child can't learn unless sitting next to a white child." He said that schools can be improved, teaching bettered, pupil satisfaction and parent participation advanced. The positive tone ran counter to all the poor-mouthing education has gotten, from kindergarten through college, in the Reagan-Rafferty regimes.

Riles is a large, resonant-voiced, earnest 53-year-old, for 14 years an elementary teacher and administrator in Arizona public schools and for the last 12 years the pivotal figure in California's program for education of deprived children. He was brought into state affairs by Gov. Brown in 1958 as a consultant on minority participation, and when California formed its compensatory education plan ahead of the federal government's Riles headed it. His approach to experimental programs, evaluation procedures and fiscal controls was so impressive that federal guidelines have been tailored largely to his model. Out of respect for his administrative skill, his budget management, his openness to innovation and his ability to get things moving without idle dispute, the California legislature and the state Board of Education made Riles' position the funnel through which federal education money entered the state. He became a national leader in education for the deprived, a member of President Johnson's Task Force on Urban Educational Opportunity, and most recently chairman of President Nixon's Task Force on Urban Education.

Among partisans, especially eager Democrats caught up in the exhilarating formulation of a new Democratic structure in California, there is a tendency to dismiss Riles' electoral achievement as an accident. Blacks who have worked long for their present respectable role in the California Democratic Party ask of Riles: "Who is he? I don't know him. I don't know where he stands." One Negro Democratic politician said irritably, "He made no impact as a black man." Minority claim for recognition has brought notable Negro leadership within the California Democratic organization. In the legislature this past year, Mervyn M. Dymally, first black state senator, was Democratic caucus chairman; John J. Miller was minority leader in the assembly; Willie L. Brown from San Francisco and Yvonne Brathwaite from Los Angeles have been key leaders in the lower house and pivotal figures in statewide party decisions. Tom Bradley, Los Angeles city councilman who drew 48 percent of the vote in his try for the mayoralty of that city two years ago, has statesman ranking in Democratic councils. To them, Riles is an unexpected intrusion.

But Riles won because the state has had enough of hate rhetoric. People are tired of being whipsawed. They want confrontation with the real problems and direct efforts to solve them. Riles' election is evidence that people care about those things that touch their lives, and they will work in politics to get them. Good education is one of them.

Although Riles, personally a Democrat, will maintain a nonpartisan stance on school affairs, his demand for quality schooling will give a push to Democratic priorities. In educational circles, there is new hope. Given the problems of teacher tenure, teacher organization, pupil evaluation, program flexibility, machines and classroom aides, there is some chance now for new initiatives. The negative era, the wasteful acrimony over sex education, moral guidelines, putative pornography, alleged Commie taint in textbooks is over. That Riles will sit, along with the Democratic Assembly speaker, as a University of California regent has already tempered that contentious body.

California had two Republican US senators. Now it has two Democratic senators. Four years ago the local party organization was heavily in debt. Now it is debtless, but for Senator John Tunney's campaign. But the party's strength reaches deeper. Four years ago the Democratic legislative majority was being nibbled away by a long-range GOP strategy to cinch GOP control for the 1970 redistricting. Democrats took seven seats this year and control both houses, to command reapportionment.

Only one Democrat won state office, Edmund G. Brown Jr., son of the former governor, chosen secretary of state. But Republican victories were narrower than anticipated and Republicans must build for the future around a self-proclaimed lame duck governor and a President unpopular in his home state. A Democratic state central committee meeting is called for late January. It will fix the Democratic course towards 1972. Right now, you can't find an active Democrat who thinks President Nixon can ever again carry California.

Mary Ellen Leary

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Mylai Was Not an Isolated Incident

What Every Vietnam Veteran Knows

by Philip Scribner Balboni

War stories are as old as man, and often their vividness grows with the telling. This summer, as a UPI reporter, I interviewed veterans of the Vietnam war and tape-recorded what they said. I did what I could to check their reliability. I inspected service records in Washington to make certain that the men were where they said they had been at the time. In one instance, but only one, I found I had been lied to, and killed the story. All the men seemed to want their recollections publicized. They were disturbed, angry.

What I present here are the brief but brutal accounts of five young Americans. They are not freaks, though what they did and saw has made them feel out of place in our society. Their stories are not uncommon, though they speak of things we would rather not hear. The more frustrated we became of winning over the Vietnamese and thus of winning the war, the more we sought to compensate by use of brute force. And this was not lost on the GI. He found himself killing women and children and old men and sometimes it drove him mad. But he did it – and no one told him it was wrong or evil. This was war, after all. Most of them kept silent, until the fall of 1969 when the Mylai incident suddenly came to light. Yet Mylai was no isolated act, and thousands of veterans can testify that it was not. In what follows, five speak for themselves:

Peter V. Fossel: *enlisted US Marine Corps Nov. 5, 1965; 3rd platoon, Mike Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Regiment; corporal.*

Peter Fossel arrived in South Vietnam two weeks before Christmas 1966 at Dongha, near the Demilitarized Zone. Shortly thereafter, the company commander was replaced. The new commander was "a big, brutish guy. He pushed everybody to their limit. And he hated the people [the Vietnamese]. But we respected him because he was an officer."

Mike company then began maiming the enemy dead by cutting off ears as war trophies.

"He [the company commander] got on to this ear thing. Every time we went out we got this pep talk about how we were going to get ears. He'd say we were going to get ears. And anybody who was shot would lose their ears. Guys would wear them under the elastic band on their helmets till they dried out. Then they would throw them away and get new ones. There was one man in my platoon. We called him the Animal. He was a football player from Michigan State and everybody tried to get as many ears as the Animal."

Once, on a three-day ambush patrol, Peter killed a man and a woman who came down a trail into a position he had set up. When informed of the kills, the platoon leader asked over the radio, "Did you get the ears? How about a couple of ears?"

Peter said he couldn't do it; he told the lieutenant that he didn't have his knife. Another Marine was dispatched to cut off the ears.

Peter said the company commander kept a blackboard in his tent known as the earboard. Each platoon was listed on the board with the number of ears it had taken.

Why was this done?

"They [the GIs] were disgusted with the Vietnamese. They were 'gooks.' Also out of frustration – never knowing who is your enemy and who is your friend. They dress differently and the women chew betel nut and have these ugly teeth. The kids deal dope all the time and all these things which to us make them look like animals – and they wear these filthy clothes and they have all these habits we're not used to, like sleeping on dirt, picking up and spreading out manure with their hands, eating food we wouldn't be seen with, drinking terrible water, not brushing their teeth or washing. I realized the Vietnamese people were the enemy . . ."

Stephen S. Noetzel: *drafted into the Army July 12, 1962; Augmentation Team, 5th Special Forces Group; specialist 4th class.*

There were only about 16,000 American soldiers in South Vietnam when Steve Noetzel got there in May 1963.

"I remember one day in November 1963. I was to fly from the [Special Forces] B-Team camp at Cantho

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Philip S. Balboni *served in Vietnam as a first lieutenant in military intelligence. He has since been a reporter for the Richmond, Va.* Times-Dispatch *and UPI, and is currently at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism on a Ford Foundation fellowship.*

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in the Mekong Delta to Saigon. It was about a 120-mile flight and the only one that day was the evacuation of 16 prisoners." Five helicopters made the trip, of which two were transport helicopters carrying eight prisoners each, South Vietnamese soldiers as guards and a full crew of Americans – pilot, copilot and door gunners.

"We advised Saigon that we were arriving in about an hour or so with 16 prisoners who had already been interrogated for weeks in the delta by the Special Forces. They were being sent to Saigon for the rehabilitation program. Arrangements had been made for the pickup of the prisoners at Tonson Airport at Saigon and several high-ranking officers were to be there to pick them up. Sixteen prisoners was a big catch then. We flew directly to Saigon. We made no stops. When we got to Saigon I saw all of the helicopters landing with us. There were exactly four prisoners left . . . four out of the 16 we had started with.

"I instantly knew what happened – the only thing that could have happened. I went over to the door gunner of one of the transport helicopters. He was black, but he was white. His face was drained. He was very shook up and he told me they had pushed them out of the helicopters. I asked him who had done it and he said the Vietnamese guards had pushed them out of the helicopters over the Mekong Delta, over Vietcong towns they knew. I was still amazed and dumbfounded and I said to him, 'They actually pushed them? How did they get them out of the helicopters?'

"He said with rifle butts and they beat and rifle-whipped them and then shoved and kicked them out of the helicopters and he said, 'If you don't believe me, take a look at the flesh that's left on the doorjamb of the helicopters and look at the fingers and flesh that's left from being belted out.' "

Steve said the US helicopter crew members must have allowed it to happen. A US Army captain was in charge of each helicopter.

Why didn't he report the incident to a higher authority?

"The consequences of not cooperating [with the Special Forces] or of telling were never made clear to me. They were only implied and it was enough real fear for me. I knew that I'd be sent on some really unusual missions."

Michael J. Uhl: *commissioned an officer in the Army July 28, 1967; Military Intelligence Team, 11th Brigade, Americal Division; team chief; 1st lieutenant.*

Part of Mike Uhl's job was to get information from the enemy and from other Vietnamese suspected of being connected with the Vietcong. Beatings and torture were routine. A favorite instrument was the battery-operated military field telephone.

"The wire that extended from the field telephone could be bared, separated and attached to the sensitive parts of the human body like the fingers, the elbows, behind the knees, the genitals, the breasts of women. On the side of the telephone there was a crank. Generally, depending on how intense the voltage was, in other words, depending on how rapidly the crank was being turned, people tense up, scream, sweat profusely, dance around in agony, go into what I would interpret as spasms . . .

"These methods were used frequently against women and children. I witnessed a young woman being wired up and also a young boy whose age I would estimate at about 12. The girl, about 16, was wired up in the presence of five or six people. The wires were attached to her fingers and she was asked the usual run of questions. Each time that she answered with an 'I don't know' or a negative answer, she was subjected to electrocution. She became so psychologically disturbed that it caused her to menstruate profusely and fall to the floor."

Mike's best friend in Vietnam, another young officer, had turned the crank.

Charles Conine: *drafted into the Army May 1, 1967; 1st platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Division; specialist 4th class.*

Chuck's whole life was changed the first week he was in Vietnam, January 1968.

"Our mechanized company was called to assist a South Vietnamese outpost which was under attack. We were ambushed en route, but we repelled the ambush. We saw a sizable NVA [North Vietnamese Army] force retreating to what turned out to be their control point. We saw from 100 to 150 of them . . . We called in air strikes and we mortared this area for about an hour. They really clobbered it. We, my squad, were elected to go down and check it out. We received some small arms fire and we retreated. Mortar fire was poured in and after that M79 (a rifle-like device for hurling grenades) and hand-thrown grenades were tossed into the area by the whole company – upwards of 500 grenades must have been thrown in there. We were a cautious company. After the mortar and grenade attack, there was no more fire.

"My squad was ordered to make the initial thrust into the area. We found a trench running around the perimeter, about 5 feet deep with spider holes laced throughout. And in almost every one of these spider holes there was either a dead or a wounded soldier. I would estimate there were 60 wounded. The final body count for the operation was 140.

"I have no idea why these guys were not still fighting. They were not resisting. They were probably in shock. We systematically moved along the trenchline and put full magazine loads [of bullets] and grenades

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into the spider holes, killing everyone we came upon. I remember one of them. It took two grenades and two magazines [40 bullets] put into him and he was still moving. It sounds incredible, but if there is anything holy, I'll swear on it.

"There were eight or 10 men involved in this. It was ordered by our platoon leader. The first guy who killed an NVA soldier took his silver belt buckle with a star on it and this sort of served as an incentive for the others. Then everybody wanted to get a 'gook' and get a belt buckle.

"When we went down the trenchline some of the soldiers raised their hands over their heads as if to fend off a blow. I didn't shoot anybody myself. I couldn't do it. I just never went to the front of the line. It was ridiculous, like a game you played when you were a kid. We proceeded down the trench single file and the lead man kept switching. When you killed a guy, you went to the back of the line."

Thinking back to that day, Chuck says, "I don't know if a protest would have gotten anywhere. Absolutely no one in the squad thought it was wrong to shoot a wounded man. It seems incredible."

Jerry Samuels: *(the last name is fictitious at the individual's request) enlisted in the Army October 1968; Headquarters & Headquarters Company, 65th Engineer Battalion, 25th Infantry Division; private first class.*

Jerry arrived in Vietnam on his 23rd birthday, March 28, 1969. "I wanted to go to Vietnam for two reasons. I wanted to do something to make my wife and my mother proud of me; and I wanted to do my thing for America and stop communism from coming to our doorstep. I wanted to see the United States just roll over North Vietnam. To hear these battle deaths just coming back, to hear that 80 to 100 Americans were killed in a week pissed me off."

Today, Jerry is a deserter, committed to end the war and fearful for his own safety because of what he saw and did in Vietnam. The incident described came at the end of a 72-hour patrol which had stretched into its fourth day and was to last yet another. It was bright, hot and dry when the men came upon the village. "It was just another lousy village, eight or 10 hootches [small thatched cottages]. We just met a little more harassment from the people. They were spitting, yelling all kinds of weird bullshit, you know, in French and Vietnamese, and a little bit of English now and then. They hated GIs. It was obvious."

As the hundred or so villagers, mostly old men, women and children, were being herded together, the shooting began.

"I would say, I would swear that anywhere from 12 to 20 died right there – innocently, unarmed civilians without returning fire, without giving us any resistance at all except for yelling and screaming a lot and every now and then an occasional bite or try to run or something. I didn't want to shoot anybody myself, but I ended up cutting loose a couple times. Everybody else was. It was the type of thing where you get so involved in something like that – and to think about it now it's awful, it's awful, but at the time, it wasn't awful because you're involved in it.

"I killed three or four that I know of who died right there. One of them had just one bullet wound that was through her neck. It sounded like she was screaming under water. I guess the blood was getting down into her lungs or something. She went down on her knees and toppled over."

After the shooting stopped Jerry said he and several other soldiers took three or four teen-aged girls out of the village: "There were about six of us and about three or four chicks. I guess each one got it about once or twice." After the girls were raped, they were shot where they lay.

"I didn't kill any of them. In fact, I didn't want them to be shot. I got to seeing myself as if I was another person watching what I was doing and it looked pretty horrible. I felt like a big bolt of lightning was supposed to come out of the sky with Uncle Sam's name attached to it and strike me dead. But it didn't. This wasn't a conscious thought. It was just that now that I think about it later, I was hoping for some kind of reprimand, somebody to say, 'You just murdered innocent people.' But nobody did.

"And like you know, that's where the war crime is – nobody seems to give a shit. People can walk around that country raping, killing and doing anything they want and nobody's going to do anything about it, 'less in a few isolated cases just to make it look like Uncle Sam's doing his duties; he's taking care of his criminals over there. You know I wanted God, somebody, to show me that was wrong. This is one of the things I dwell on so damn much now – it wasn't wrong then."

How could it happen?

"Because they were 'gooks.' I will say this, and this is a fact; the longer you're in Vietnam, the more you leg it, the more inhuman you become. You forget about the world. You forget about paved streets, flushing toilets and colored TV sets. All of a sudden you're out in the jungle. The most ruthless men there, the guys who are firing and raping and all this sort of thing, are the legs [Army slang for infantrymen]. It's a crime not only on the young American kid for turning him into one of these monsters; it's also a crime on the Vietnamese people.

"Can you see how horrible the war is from that standpoint? But the average American who goes there and experiences this puts it under the rug and forgets it, denies it."

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Stanley Kauffmann on films

The Confession

(Paramount)

> In Poland, they did not execute their Gomulka, in Bulgaria and Hungary they executed one minister each, but the crop of Czechoslovak Stalinism was the richest of all.

Thus writes Ivan Svitak, the exiled Czech philosopher, and that crop is what concerns Costa-Gavras in his new film. The director of *Z* has turned from a melodrama with a political setting to a true political drama. With the same scriptwriter, Jorge Semprun, he has made a harrowing film from Artur London's autobiography, *The Confession*. (The book, translated from the French, has just been published by Morrow.) London, a former Czech deputy foreign minister, previously a hero of the anti-Nazi underground, a staunch Communist then and now, tells the story of his arrest on charges of espionage in January 1951 and the consequences. Like the thirteen others arrested around that time, he eventually made a public and false confession of guilt in the infamous Slansky trial of November 1952. Eleven of the defendants were executed; London and two others were sentenced to life imprisonment, but in the post-Stalinist days he was freed and rehabilitated. He and his wife now live in France.

Cinematically, the challenge of this story was huge because the bulk of it is visually repetitious – a long series of walks down corridors, interrogations, denials, harassments in the cell. Costa-Gavras solves this basic cinematic problem very ingeniously. Even more than in *Z*, he deals in short shots, and almost every shot contains something in motion – a character or the camera itself. Almost no shot is held more than, say, ten seconds, and almost none is fixed. This syntactical method creates a sense of dynamics even when the material, by its very nature, struggles to remain in stasis – that is, London does not want to change.

Costa-Gavras is greatly aided by three factors. The physical reality of the film is superb: the dampness, the dark, the differing types of blindfold as London is led back and forth from his different cells, the freshly carpentered cubicles in which the defendants wait outside the courtroom, and so on. All of these touches are heightened by the photography of Raoul Coutard who did *Z* and who handles color as revelation, not as surface. (You feel that the walls are the same color all the way *through*.) Third, the performance of Yves Montand as London. I've never been a great admirer of Montand's acting, but there's very little high "emoting" to be done here, so the part lies well within his range. What's needed is facial evidence of worms eating slowly at the guts, and Montand makes this utterly genuine. His look, in the very first shot, when he comes down the ministry steps and spots the police agents waiting, contains the whole film in little. Later, during the months-long questionings, his weary, whiskered face seems a political map of twentieth-century Europe.

Simone Signoret, grown gross, is adequate as his wife. Gabriele Ferzetti, who was the architect in *L'Avventura*, plays Kohoutek, the chief interrogator. (Dubbed into French?) London writes that Kohoutek "had something of the professional salesman," and Ferzetti gets this quality quite well. The subtitles by Noelle Gilmor are, predictably, good.

But there is something missing. It may seem ridiculous to criticize a true story in terms of what it lacks artistically, but if art weren't different from life, we wouldn't need it. The obvious comparison for *The Confession* is *Darkness at Noon*, and Koestler is better. I'm not being flip about London's sufferings; I'm talking only about what is shown on the screen, and there we see a considerable gap between Koestler's novel and London - Semprun - Costa - Gavras. The chief difference is that Koestler's point is to show an intellectual transformation, a rationalization of harsh injust fate into the fulfillment of one's purpose. No such transformation, or any other, goes on in *The Confession;* it simply presents a process of attrition and chicanery that wears its victim down.

Essentially, the film does little more than restate, with force, what we have known ever since the Moscow trials in 1938: Communist ethics are ahistorical. They have nothing to do with traditional concepts of truth and justice for the individual, they have only to do with programmatic success. They even implicitly (sometimes explicitly) acknowledge individual injustice but hold it irrelevant to the long view. The great question for the world is whether a philosophy that crushes individual justice as it chooses can ever realize the international justice for which it does the crushing. This is a more chilling question than the old one about whether the end (Communist triumph) justifies the means.

And this leads to the question: why did London hold out? Why didn't he confess at once, or soon, to the false espionage charges? He knew, better than any of us possibly could, what the examinations were for, what the trial would be for, where it would all end. He writes in his book:

> In such conditions, it is not only impossible for a Communist to prove his innocence but it presents him with a grotesque conscience problem: if you agree to 'confess,' in the Party's eyes you enter the path of your redemption. But if you refuse to sign because you are innocent you are a hardened culprit who must be mercilessly liquidated.

Weren't his personal standards, which made him courageously refuse to 'confess' for many months, essentially irrelevant? Inapplicable? Weren't they really standards of bourgeois individualism?

Harold Rosenberg criticized Koestler because

> He did not attack the jailors of Rubashov for specific violations of socialist values but placed the responsibility on Rubashov himself as representing with them a metaphysical absolute – "the logic of history" – opposed to the individual by the nature of things.

Here there is no "author." A "Rubashov" wrote *The Confession*, a Rubashov who was formerly a powerful official in a Stalinist regime. This shifts the focus very considerably and makes idealistic sympathy, as distinct from human compassion, more shadowy.

The film is not meant to be anti-Communist. There are flashes forward, during the prison months, in which London talks with friends in France *post hoc* and declines to let his book be used as a weapon against his un-

(Continued on page 24)

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Peter Michelson: Tom Wolfe Overboard

Radical Chic & Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers by Tom Wolfe

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $5.95)

Through the insistent tour de force in Tom Wolfe, through his dazzling superhip style, one feels that he is after something important, that beneath all the bzazz there must be a pulse. But it's so deeply buried beneath his precious and lightning-quick brain. For example, in his first book, *The Kandy Kolored Tangerine Flake Streamline Baby*, he told us that Las Vegas was "something rare and rather grand: a combination of baroque stimuli that brings to mind the bronze gongs, no larger than a blue plate, that Louis XIV, his ruff collars larded with the lint of the foul Old City of Byzantium, personally hunted out in the bazaars of Asia Minor to provide exotic acoustics for his new palace outside Paris." Las Vegas, it turned out, was the American Versailles. So, we discovered later in *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, was Ken Kesey's place in La Honda, California. In fact one comes to feel that, for Wolfe, America is a vast Hall of Mirrors, existing so that he may polish its brittle, brilliant, shining surfaces. And when he portrays Junior Johnson (the ace Southern stock-car driver) as an indigenous American Lancelot, and when George Barris (the California car customizer) becomes for him an indigenous American Praxiteles, one feels that maybe Wolfe is taking American pop culture out to lunch.

And then there is this revealing paragraph in that earlier book:

> I've mentioned Ed Roth several times in the course of this without really telling you about him. And I want to, because he, more than any other of the [car] customizers, has kept alive the spirit of alienation and rebellion that is so important to the teen-age ethos that customizing grew up in. He's also the most colorful, and the most intellectual, and the most capricious. Also the most cynical. He's the Salvador Dali of the movement – a surrealist in his designs, a showman by temperament, a prankster. *Roth is really too bright to stay within the ethos, but he stays in it with a spirit of luxurious obstinacy.*

The italics are mine, because I think here we're tipped off to Wolfe's disaffected condescension, the quality that, though it lets him play the master gamesman of American pop, keeps him from the visceral levels of human experience. He aspires to a love affair with America, but he can't quite make it with her until she is dolled up some.

The point is that, although Wolfe may genuinely be trying to illuminate a native American culture, he himself is harnessed into the same Anglo-European, eastern establishment liberal pretensions of which he is so contemptuous. For instance, though he clearly admires Barris, his admiration is tainted with condescension. For Barris, an American primitive bagged by Wolfe on one of his safaris through the American veld, is apparently, unlike Roth, not bright enough to get out of the ethos.

Wolfe has a strange love-hate game going with that ethos, and one has the feeling that he hunts down trophies with a vengeance, to show his former professors at Yale how far they are from knowing what America is. Wolfe knows who he is talking to. Not the American primitives, who are merely grist for his mill, but those professors, the Anglo-European culturati. And he is by god going to rub their noses in the real thing. Yet there is no question but that Wolfe is larger than his vendetta. When, as in *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, he breaks out of the confines of journalism and gets more or less clear from bludgeoning the dead horse Culturatus, he is at his best. *The Acid Test* is a good book because it not only documents the episodes and personalities crucial to the development of acid culture but it also provides a point of view that no first-person account could. It is at once sympathetic and disengaged. Wolfe's gamesmanship is minimal. He really does tell the story of Kesey's bus, the story of the Big Trip so symbolically central to understanding current goings-on.

So what happened in his new book, *Radical Chic & Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers*? Perhaps the most important thing is that the condescension smoldering through the earlier work has burst into the full flame of contempt in the "Radical Chic" half of this book (it consists of two long essays, "Radical Chic" and "Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers"). Both pieces have Wolfe's characteristic strengths – wit, incisiveness, and cultural savvy. But in "Radical Chic" they go berserk and have, their nicety notwithstanding, the effect of a rather pointlessly ruptured spleen, all over Leonard Bernstein and his Radical Chic friends. The invention of Leonard Bernstein as a symbolic comfort for the well-upholstered and high-toned in their time of trouble must have come to Wolfe like the soft underbelly of a lamb.

No summary or description can show how thoroughly Wolfe thrashes chic society's sentimentalities, gamesmanship, guilt, and moral confusion, their "tried and true *nostalgie de la boue*"; but, does one really need a two-ton wrecking ball to swat a vestigial winged fruit fly? So the chic sorts in New York society take a Panther home to dinner, so they are caught in the act, so they are ridiculous, so *what*? And what kind of kick is there in ridiculing a man who, in the face of being at the clean end of a dirty stick, is no more ludicrous, no more confused, and neither more nor less guilty than anyone else, including Wolfe? Somehow – maybe it's the ad hominem effect of an attack on Bernstein, maybe it's Wolfe's cool superiority to it all – but somehow, laughable as it is, there isn't even much humor in Wolfe's account. Just more smugness. Neither is there the sense of ethical alternative that might make the story satirical. Anyway, why bother to satirize a "class" of people – the New York chic set – who are socially and politically inconsequential? To parody vacuousness, as Wolfe has done in "Radical Chic," is to come up after all with just that, a vacuous parody.

"Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers," because it has at least some ethical sense and because it does have genuine humor, is much closer to Wolfe's good

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work. Here he dismounts his hobby horse and tracks substantive prey. The first paragraph beautifully articulates a very real problem, how a profoundly ignorant bureaucracy reduces the administration of the poverty program to a ridiculously degrading game:

> Going downtown to mau-mau the bureaucrats got to be the routine practice in San Francisco. The poverty program *encouraged* you to go in for mau-mauing. They wouldn't have known what to do without it. The bureaucrats at City Hall and in the Office of Economic Opportunity talked "ghetto" all the time, but they didn't know any more about what was going on in the Western Addition, Hunters Point, Potrero Hill, the Mission, Chinatown, or south of Market Street than they did about Zanzibar. They didn't know where to look. They didn't even know who to ask. So what could they do? Well . . . they used *the Ethnic Catering Service* . . . right . . . They sat back and waited for you to come rolling in with your certified angry militants, your guaranteed frustrated ghetto youth, looking like a bunch of wild men. Then you had your test confrontation. If you were outrageous enough, if you could shake up the bureaucrats so bad that their eyes froze into iceballs and their mouths twisted up into smiles of sheer physical panic, into shit-eating grins, so to speak – then they knew you were the real goods. They knew you were the right studs to give the poverty grants and community organizing jobs to. Otherwise they wouldn't know.

The consequences of *this* game being so lethal, and the players of the game being so crucial to understanding our national malaise, Wolfe's portrayal of it performs a difficult and important cultural service – pinpointing the causes both of the poverty program's ineffectuality and the too frequent dissipation of black power energies into theatricality and other symbolic diversions. Unlike Radical Chic, mau-mauing and flak catching are not trivial. Their choreography, as Wolfe so perceptively and brilliantly illuminates, is a principal cause of the paralysis of social justice in this country. For the noncommunication between the impoverished and the bureaucracy of the poverty program has become a theatrical event rehearsed each night on our television screens – ADC mothers, migrant workers, fair employment, fair housing, regularly the same story: the Invisible Man talking to Monopolated Edison.

Wolfe locates the key to the trouble in the yea-saying, know-nothing bureaucrat whose job it is to sympathize with complaints, absorb the hostility of the plaintiff, and return him to the block hopefully purged of his impotent fury: " 'Now I'm here to try to answer any questions I can,' he says, 'but you have to understand that I'm only speaking as an individual, and so naturally none of my comments are binding, but I'll answer any questions I can, and . . .,' "

> And then it dawns on you, and you wonder why it took so long for you to realize it. This man is the flak catcher. His job is to catch the flak for the No. 1 man. He's like the professional mourners you can hire in Chinatown. They have certified wailers, professional mourners, in Chinatown, and when your loved one dies, you can hire the professional mourners to wail at the funeral and show what a great loss to the community the departed is. In the same way this lifer is ready to catch whatever flak you're sending up. It doesn't matter what bureau they put him in. It's all the same.

That's the Flak Catcher, the man who, naturally, can't answer any questions but whose job it is to answer any questions he can. Wolfe observes that, when the Mau-Maus come into an OEO office and meet the Flak Catcher rather than the Man, "Everybody knows the scene is a shuck, but you can't just walk out and leave. You can't get it on and bring thirty-five people walking all the way from the Mission to 100 McAllister and then just turn around and go back. So . . . might as well get into the number . . ." The number is that the Mau-Maus ask the Flak Catcher the questions he can't answer, which he proceeds not to answer at some length, until they mau-mau him (a simulated terrorizing played out by both parties), demanding he deliver their complaints to the Man direct, which he promises to do – mañana. But, as Wolfe notes, tomorrow never comes. Mau-mauing, like all good theater, is purgative. After the show your passion is spent. If you're lucky your act taps you into an auxiliary line and you get a few kilowatts. And the beat goes on. A few Mau-Maus get a little bread, and things change the same.

There is a comic dimension to all this that Wolfe reveals. Such as the story of Earl Williams and his New Society. Under the name of Jomo Yarumba, dressed in a dashiki, and surrounded by an army of sixty black children armed with "the greatest grandest sweetest creamiest runniest and most luscious mess of All-American pop drinks, sweets and fried food ever brought together in one place," Williams invaded San Francisco's much gilded City Hall, announcing, when told the mayor was completely tied up all day, that, "We ain't budging, man. We're here to tend to business." Whereupon his army sets to "filling the very air with a hurricane of malted milk, an orange blizzard of crushed ice from the Slurpees, with acid red horrors like the red from the taffy apples and the jelly from the jelly doughnuts, with globs of ice cream in purple sheets of root beer," etc. "And Earl Williams orchestrated the madness in his whirling dashiki." Soon enough the mayor is untied and Earl Williams' New Society Dashiki Factory is set up for business. So goes social progress in these States.

Wolfe's new book is saved by "Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers." Unlike "Radical Chic," it not only exposes and spanks social absurdities but also suggests ethical alternatives to bureaucratic paralysis. Quite simply, it tells the Man to show himself, and then to talk straight as well to himself as to those who need his services. Further it tells us, those of us who are willy-nilly agents of the Man, how profoundly out of touch we are with both our own governmental structures and the realities of the poverty that flourishes in the midst of our plenty. Finally, and perhaps most surprisingly important, it tells the black man how vulnerable he is to gamesmanship.

The authority and persuasiveness of the documentary narrative form that Wolfe works in, along with such others as Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, and John Hersey, depend on the quality inherent in the events documented as much as the writer's ability to represent them. The importance of the right event can be seen in the failure of "Radical Chic" and the success of "Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers." Both of them get the Wolfe treatment, but Radical Chic doesn't survive either Wolfe's journalistic jive or his personal contempt for his subject. And it reveals what had not surfaced so blatantly in Wolfe's work before, an unresolved three-way tug of war between

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the demands of his trademark journalistic style, the demands of his personal condescension and superiority, and the demands of a documentary form.

When one compares Wolfe's new book with John Hersey's recent *Letter to the Alumni* – both of which treat roughly the same subject, the interaction of black militancy and white liberalism and the establishment power structure – one gets a sense of what's missing in Wolfe. Hersey's book is altogether unhip, but it very carefully and very sympathetically – sympathetically for conservative and liberal and radical alike, treating them with understanding and respect for their humanity, regardless of whatever moral and intellectual failures they exhibit – lays out the components, dynamics, potential, and meaning of Yale's Mayday crisis last spring. It is that care and human sympathy that seem lacking in Wolfe, his unwillingness to subordinate himself to his subject, to see not only its dazzling surfaces but also its human depths. That is why he cannot penetrate to where we hurt most, at the core of hate, fear, impotence, and degradation that festers beneath the American game of life.

Arthur Mizener: A Dubiously Delightful Dad

My Father: Joseph Conrad by Borys Conrad

(Coward-McCann; $5.95)

This could have been a fascinating book, a glimpse of the actual Joseph Conrad we so badly need knowledge of. The implausible effigy of Conrad that Jessie Conrad imposed on the world and that was accepted by disciples like Jean-Aubry and Curle still dominates the public conception of Conrad. But Conrad was something more interesting, a complex and difficult man. A few revealing details about this Conrad do emerge here, more or less by accident. We learn, for instance, of Conrad's delight in motor cars and his wilful extravagance in buying them, though only because Borys Conrad talks at length about his own knowledge of early motor cars and his skill in driving them. (Why did motor cars so fascinate Conrad and his contemporaries? We have Edith Wharton's word for James's delight in them and James's word for Kipling's and Ford Madox Ford's word for his own.) But apart from a few such details, we learn little from this book; and what we do learn is seriously distorted by Borys Conrad's determination to make Conrad out a delightful, if occasionally eccentric, husband and father, which he plainly was not, and to make Jessie out a heroically self-effacing woman, which her own books clearly show she was not.

Even where Borys can offer a vivid eye-witness account of an episode in Conrad's life his ignorance leaves it meaningless. Thus he tells us of how, as a small boy, he was "awakened by my Mother in the middle of the night, and carried downstairs and into the garden through clouds of evil-smelling smoke" and watched while his mother "returned to the house and assisted my Father in smothering the flames which were visible through the window of his room." He adds that he knows no reference in print to this episode but believes one of the stories in *Typhoon*, possibly "Amy Foster," was lost in the fire.

The facts are that, on the night of June 23, 1902, Conrad was working on "The End of the Tether" in his study at the Pent, which Ford Madox Ford had vacated and rented furnished to Conrad because Conrad found himself unable to write at Stanford-le-Hope. Suddenly and mysteriously the oil lamp on Conrad's table exploded,

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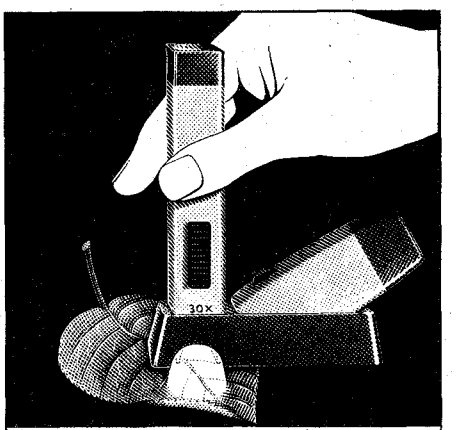

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spilling flaming oil everywhere. Such, at least, was Conrad's story; his lifelong tendency to self-frustrating accidents during times of stress raises certain doubts about it. (In a similar moment he once set fire to the tail of the Fords' cat, Hall Caine.)

The fire burned the table, which Ford treasured because it had been designed for his grandfather, Ford Madox Brown, by William Morris. It also destroyed the second installment of "The End of the Tether." The next day, Conrad wrote Ford:

> The fire ran in streams and Jess and I threw blankets and danced around on them; the blaze in the window was remarked in Postling [or only in the garden?]. Then all was over but the horrid stink. . . . This morning looking at the pile of charred paper – MS and typed copy – my head swam. . . .

As he always did in such crises, Ford rushed to the rescue. Conrad was moved to Winchelsea, where Ford lived, was provided by Ford with peace and quiet and some help with the writing of his story, and "The End of the Tether" was finally sent off to *Blackwood's Magazine* three weeks late. This episode is described by Ford in *Return to Yesterday* and by Borys' mother in *Joseph Conrad as I Knew Him*. But this information has escaped Borys, as have his mother's several – and varying – accounts of the mad gardener, Hunt, on whom he spends some time.

The book also contains a number of unintentionally revealing examples of the extravagance that created so much trouble for Conrad. Borys wonders why Conrad decided to take Jessie all the way to Capri to recover from her knee operation; one might, indeed, ask, especially as the trip was plainly too much for Jessie. He describes in detail the expensive sailor suits Conrad insisted on his having and the silver cigarette-case and match box Conrad gave him on his fifteenth birthday. It never occurs to him to ask if Conrad could afford these gestures, perhaps because he inherited Conrad's extravagance – and suffered from it severely.

Borys was badly shell-shocked in World War I and for a long time after suffered from spells of terrifying fear of open places. The post-war Borys was, according to his friends, "morose and silent and obviously a changed man mentally"; he was plainly seriously ill. After Conrad's death, his illness took a characteristically Conradian turn; he became "extremely extravagant, taking the view that his expectations would be enormous." Eventually he got himself deeply into debt, and so ill-designed were his schemes for relieving his situation that he ended up in jail. Things never came to that for Joseph Conrad, not because he behaved much more wisely than Borys, but because there was always somebody – Ford, Galsworthy, Pinker – to rescue him.

None of this Conrad is, except indirectly and by accident, shown us in this book, nor are any of the often touching details of Borys' own life, though his book is heavily padded with stories about himself.

James Walt: Raking the Muck with Care

McClure's Magazine and the Muckrakers by Harold S. Wilson

(Princeton University Press; $10)

It is a mistake to suppose that the leading figures of the muckraking movement (1903-1912) had a common philosophy or – lacking anything as solid as a philosophy – joined in a bellicose, anarchic hatred of American institutions. To be sure, Ida Tarbell, the Sorbonne-educated lady whose history of Standard Oil made corporation executives look less amiable than bomb-throwing assassins, was distinctly to the left of the DAR. But Sam McClure, her editor, was a Fundamentalist by training and a law-and-order man who came to the conclusion that our inefficient democracy needed a dictator with the combined virtues of Theodore Roosevelt and Mussolini. Lincoln Steffens, McClure's most accomplished writer, became thoroughly radicalized only when the muckraking movement was over, and his paeans to red revolution are as remote as possible from his chastened and objective accounts of corruption in St. Louis, Minneapolis, and Pittsburgh.

For all their differences, the muckrakers agreed that exploitation of the country's resources – natural and human – was proceeding with devastating shrewdness. Invisible government by political bosses who never held office robbed the voters of a right to choose responsible leaders. Patent-medicine manufacturers preyed on children with "soothing syrups" largely compounded of alcohol or morphine and cocaine. Coal miners died by the thousands because America lagged decades behind England, France, and Belgium in enforcing a national safety code. The meat issued from Chicago's Packingtown made a mockery of state inspection laws and threatened the health of unsuspecting millions. Practically everybody, if we believe the charges fostered by a dozen or more muckraking magazines, was exploiting somebody else.

Long before the muckraking movement, newspapers had played with drum and fife on the theme that they intended to protect the public against exploiters. Horace Greeley's *Tribune*, for example, accused Lincoln and other Congressmen of padding their expense accounts. The New York *World* scolded aldermen who had bamboozled the taxpayers, protested the greed of slum landlords, attacked the monopolistic power of Bell Telephone, and anticipated some of Ida Tarbell's lurid charges against Standard Oil. For the most part, however, the newspapers concentrated their firepower on local issues and local offenders, leaving the giants to media with a nationwide circulation.

Sam McClure was a fatherless, immigrant Irish boy equipped with a hopeful imagination that whispered to him that he was slated to become the Napoleon of publishing. No rival editor was a

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patch on McClure when it came to perfectionism. To satisfy his passion for accuracy Ida Tarbell spent four years investigating Standard Oil, and Lincoln Steffens had to revise his stuff like a schoolchild putting his first sentences on paper under a tyrannical pedant. In the end this paternalism proved too costly, since McClure's best writers rebelled and set up their own magazine, but for a time it enabled McClure to come as close as anyone to squaring the circle. The muckraking articles he published between 1903 and 1911, though sensational, were models of battle strategy and essential conservatism, never exactly timid but never so bold as to plunge McClure into a libel suit. Brasher magazines that rushed pell-mell into the field may have reduced the influence of *McClure's* upon the public, but its editor's influence on the publishing world was enormous. He opened his magazine to dozens of promising authors, including will-o'-the-wisp talents like O. Henry and palpable talents like Willa Cather. He was one of the founding fathers of the popular magazine. Though he inaugurated twentieth-century muckraking with the January 1903 issue of *McClure's*, he set a literary standard envied by *Harper's* and the *Atlantic Monthly*. And though he made senile speeches filled with a mumbo jumbo about Mussolini, McClure had the diamond-hard integrity of an Alger hero.

McClure's virtues, a bit sentimentalized found their hagiographer in Peter Lyon, author of *Success Story*. Now Harold S. Wilson, writing readably but in a lower key than Lyon, leaves no question as to the vigor of McClure's mind and the merits of his magazine. Those merits vanished in 1911 when it fell into the hands of debtors. Several other magazines that had lived by muckraking died in the same year, and after 1912 *Pearson's Magazine* was the sole survivor of the debacle. Wilson, a scholarly writer with a scorn for romancing (though he *would* have Stephen Crane contributing to the *Illustrated American Magazine* six years after his death), sees no significance in the sudden extinction or overnight conversion of periodicals that had led the muckraking movement. True, he reminds us that Walter Lippmann had heard "twenty times of a nationwide scheme by financiers to suppress muckraking periodicals," but he does nothing with it (and it must be granted that no one has come forward with completely satisfying evidence, even now). Mostly Wilson is content to look at the movement fragmentarily; his chief interest is in the philosophical principles that motivated writers like Lincoln Steffens and Ray Stannard Baker, and his analysis of these men proves that the foremost muckrakers were thinkers rather than hell-raising "Front Page" sots.

Readers searching for a larger, more crowded, more dramatic picture of the muckraker movement should turn to Louis Filler's *Crusaders for American Liberalism*. If it is neither Homer nor Tolstoy, it is the nearest we have to an epic about the triumphs and failures, the intransigence and compromises of magazine journalists early in the century.

Notable

For the Good of the Cause
by Alexander Solzhenitsyn
Translated by David Floyd and Max Hayward
(Praeger; $5.50)

The award of the 1970 Nobel Prize for literature to Alexander Solzhenitsyn was a political act with a familiar ring to it, an act clearly designed to annoy Soviet officialdom, since Solzhenitsyn has in recent years been "forced to exist in a state of semi-poverty in Russia" and been reduced "practically to the status of an 'unperson.'" (From David Floyd's introduction to *For the Good of the Cause*.) The award may well make things even harder for Solzhenitsyn, who has already announced that he will not attend the ceremonies in Stockholm; and the ameliorative effect of the award upon current repressions in the USSR is most doubtful. Sometimes the Swedish Academy's politics seem impolitic, but in any event Solzhenitsyn is a worthy winner and his case is a tragic one.

For the Good of the Cause is a long short story that appeared in Russia in 1963 and was first published in the U.S. in 1964. The American edition is now being reissued, with a new introduction, because of the Nobel award. It is a simple, strong story of how a new school building that had been constructed by students was suddenly and imperiously transferred out of the school's hands by bureaucrats, for obscure state purposes, leaving school personnel helpless and fuming. The chief villain of the piece is openly presented as a Stalinist and criticized by

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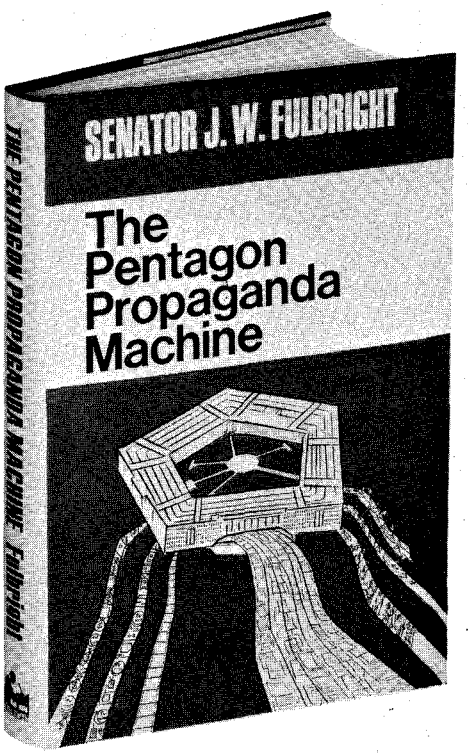

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the opposition for building Communism at the expense of people.

Following the story's Russian appearance a controversy about its merits developed in the Soviet press, and much of the controversy, which makes an intelligent brief introduction to the nature and problems of Soviet literary criticism, is reprinted in the Praeger volume. The controversy was largely resolved in Solzhenitsyn's favor in 1963, but seems to have been his last victory. His major later works, *Cancer Ward* and *The First Circle*, have only appeared outside the Soviet Union.

Impressionists and Impressionism
by Maria and Godfrey Blunden
(Skira, distributed by World; $50.00)

Coffee tables that are rich enough (Norman Rockwell costs $10 more) will be the handsomer for this book, and happier too. It is a lavish presentation of impressionism, with good reproductions and an unjargony text. The dominant mood, which color, texture and scene conspire together to produce, is serenity, most evident in the skyscapes and seascapes and *tableaux* of rural life, but even apparent in Monet's paintings of trains (with the soft pastoral pollution rising from the smokestacks). Only an occasional portrait suggests pain and trouble. As Kenneth Clark observes, in one of the many blurbs that speckle the volume: "Impressionism is the perfect expression of democratic humanism, of the good life which was, until recently, thought to be within reach of all." Why on earth did it have to be succeeded?

Television

The Enduringly Crummy

Once upon a time there were Benny Goodman and Guy Lombardo. Goodman got his big start on a late Saturday-night radio show called "Let's Dance" – a misnomer, for though he was seriously implicated in the crime of jitterbug he should be remembered chiefly for launching the let's-not-dance-but-stand-and-gape craze. Lombardo was BG's antidote. I don't know where he began but he rose rapidly to the Starlight Room of the Waldorf Astoria, and to other white-tablecloth grandeurs, by playing so slowly and childishly that the great washed *could* dance – dance the fox trot, dance the waltz. Not swing. Lombardo was the first significant anti-swinger to clamber out of primeval jazz ooze.

Goodman was a big fast noisy band as well as a slinky combo. His best performances were a mixture of the highly machined and the wildly improvised. Clustered around him were lesser swingers like the Dorseys, Artie Shaw and Glen Miller; and among the fans of this set you could always tell the *afficionados* from the clods (I was a medium clod) by how far down from BG toward Lombardo they would be willing to go in their jukebox hours.

As for Lombardo, he was, remember, smooth as silk, but with a little jog to him for the speeds. Clustered around him were dozens of schmaltz bands led by the likes of Wayne King (the Waltz King) and Shep Fields (Champagne music – i.e., a steady bubbling noise). Most of these are gone now, like the swing bands – but Lombardo himself is to the best of my knowledge still functioning, as is his successor Lawrence Welk. At 67 Welk is less than a year younger than Lombardo, but he began his climb to the musical heights a decade or two later. Now here he is, 1970, on the tube for an hour each Saturday night (CBS). He has picked up a few tips from the defunct swingers, but mostly he does schmaltz and does it straight and cleverly betrays no awareness that he is dead.

Last spring, in a somewhat similar TV musical show called, I think, "The Thirties," the producers stressed the enormous antiquity of the music and manners being presented. Opening shot: an old Atwater Kent surrounded by cobwebs through which the m.c. struggled to turn on the switch. The show has now joined the Atwater Kent,

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and if anyone were to ask me why I would say, "but of course – you're sure to die if you declare your customers dead." Welk does not commit that stupidity: a small sampling of his delighted customers can be seen swaying and gently sliding in front of his band as he plays, and they are exactly the same age and *decor* (ruffles, bald heads) that they were in Lombardo's prime!

"I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm" came in loud and clear on Welk's last program, with several singers cavorting illogically in front of a roaring fire. There were many other songs of that ilk, all introduced soberly, all lasting about three minutes, all showing the kind of straightforward and unimaginative efficiency the big-time schmaltz bands used to be noted for – with the singers actually hitting and holding their fated notes (rather than yodelling off and away in the modern vein) and the dancers busily emulating the young manhood of Fred Astaire. Most of the performers *were* youthful but there was not a longhair within miles, and no announcers were smirking or filling the mike with innuendoes that this, like Campbell's Tomato Soup, was pop art. The nearest thing to the counter-culture appeared in the person of a young and sharp-eyed brunette, introduced as none other than Mrs. Lawrence Welk, Jr. She yodelled slightly, and looked as if she would like to yodel more. I didn't catch sight of Mr. Lawrence Welk, Jr. Maybe he has a beard?

I never liked either Lombardo or Welk much, and I'm pretty sure that in the big history of 20th century popular music to be issued by the Oxford University Press in 2010 they will receive only a line or two; the big motion in their lifetime was from the jazz of the twenties to Swing and then, I suppose, the Beatles (with Sachmo and a couple of others writing their own histories). Yet what the history will not say is that schmaltz persisted tirelessly through everything, never deserving notice but always playing – and playing – in the background of a billion dinners with cover charge; or in the background now of a billion tired bedroom scenes – one eye open, the mind in Timbuctoo. My, but I slept soundly after the Welk show.

Less pleasantly soporific is some of the Christmas schmaltz floating near. I keep being particularly pressed to watch Charlie Brown's cartoon version of Christmas Eve – the one with the dead Xmas tree that turns out o.k. because it's (though sponsored by Coca-Cola) not commercial. I apologize for finding Charlie Brown really soppy like Guy Lombardo, but I do – and I find him also, unlike Lombardo, terribly pretentious.

But I suppose that twenty years from now, with God's permission, I'll be watching Charlie Brown and liking him simply because he's been around so long.

Sedulus

Notes on Contributors

Peter Michelson's *new book,* The Aesthetics of Pornography, *will be published this spring by Herder & Herder.* Arthur Mizener's *forthcoming book is* Saddest Story (World). James Walt *teaches English at Maryland University.*

Correspondence

Spiroagnosis

Sirs:

I have enjoyed my new subscription to the New Republic and found it particularly informative during the recent fall election campaign. This was especially helpful since, as duly noted in the columns of your journal, we were subjected to an inordinate amount of nonsense and foolishness from all sides. As an epidemiologist, I cannot help noting that this is a mass phenomenon with acute exacerbations and remissions.

Being a sometime Greek scholar, I followed a hunch, thinking that perhaps the names of those engaged in these activities might provide clues as to the nature of the malady. Greek has always offered us a wealth of definitions for use in medical terminology, so I naturally began with the name of a recently obscure but now leading politician of Greek extraction who has become one of the more prominent purveyors of political perversity.

Consulting my copy of Liddell and Scott's abridged Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford Press, 1958), I found the word *speíro* on page 645 defined as "to scatter like seed, fling, throw about: to spread a report." Page 6 was even more informative:

agnoéo – not to perceive or know, to be ignorant

ágnoiá – a want of perception, ignorance

agnomonéo – to act without judgment, act ignorantly or unfairly

agnomónos – senselessly

agnomosúnei – want of sense or judgment – senseless pride, arrogance

agnós – unknown, obscure. Obscure, ignoble. not knowing, ignorant of.

agnosía – a not knowing, ignorance. a being unknown, obscurity

These definitions, while imprecise in themselves, offer us a clear enough juxtaposition of similar meanings to allow identification of this affliction. I suggest we call it *"spiroagnosis,"* meaning, *"to go around spreading nonsense."*

The diagnosis of this illness is simple. Its principal victims exhibit hyperventilation, mandibular fibrillation, and the spouting of patent nonsense. Alliteration is a common finding. The secondary attack rate is high, particularly when the audiences are large and well supplied with expensive liquor.

The treatment is long, painful, and difficult, consisting mainly of education.

The prognosis is excellent if preventive treatment is instituted early in life, but most untreated cases appear to be intractable and quite hopeless once the process has become established.

Warren M. Hern, MD
Washington, DC

Problem Solving

Sirs:

Mark J. Green's article, "Business in Government" (November 14) includes a discussion of the then pending public controversy of the Center for Law and Social Policy and other public interest law firms. This tax problem was the subject of a vigorous public discussion involving the press, members of Congress, representatives of the Executive Branch, including Commissioner of Internal Revenue Thrower, as well as representatives of the groups whose status was at issue. I believe that the matter was resolved in a manner which will enable the public interest law firms not only to survive but to flourish. The episode and its resolution is a laboratory example of the ability of government, including the Internal Revenue Service, to recognize and respond to effective responsible argument.

Louis F. Oberdorfer
Washington, DC

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De Gaulle Experts

Sirs:

Obviously, I do not in any way contest Simon Serfaty's right to express his distaste for the book or its style, but I do think he is wrong when he says (*NR*, November 21) that I offer "no new material on de Gaulle" –which is certainly not the opinion of French experts on the General or his former associates.

I have read the books referred to by Mr. Serfaty as well as, I believe, most other works on de Gaulle, although I confess I have never ready any novel by André Malraux which does "a much better job of explaining the General."

I would merely like to call to your attention that William Shirer, author of *The Collapse of the Third Republic*, has said of *The Last of The Giants*: ". . . Above all it gives best portrait of de Gaulle we've had in English and the most objective in any language. . . ."

C. L. Sulzberger
The New York Times

Kauffmann, *from page 16*

changed political philosophy. One must admire his refusal to revel in the embrace of eager red-baiters. But there is something inescapably mutton-headed in his insistence on personal ethics, his refusal to accept the facelessness that his Party – as it has proved thousands of times – relies on in him whenever it chooses to summon it. He has even seen that the Party thinks nothing of discarding its advertised credo for tactical purposes. All during the interrogations and the trial there was a stream of vile anti-Semitism. (London is a Jew, as were many of the other defendants.)

For whom, then, is he being individualistically virtuous? And what is the root purpose of this film? (Of the book, too.) Presumably to help humanize Communism. I should think it would be easier, though not much more likely, to humanize capitalism.

The film has one telling anti-statist gesture, during the carefully rehearsed trial. One defendant is in the middle of his memorized testimony when his trousers drop, ostensibly because he has grown so thin. The crowd laughs, and he joins in; but Costa-Gavras holds it so long and so brutally that we see that the prisoner is making the only comment he could make, with his trousers, on the words he is forced to speak.

There are three final bitter moments. One day the rehabilitated London meets Kohoutek in the street. The ex-interrogator has himself been in jail. Now he shrugs off his past harassment of London and invites him to have a beer. Dazed, London drifts away.

Second, London returns to the "new" Prague in 1968 to have his book published, just in time to see the Soviet tanks roll in. (In his book he hails the post-Stalin Soviet Union after his release and says that his "confidence in the Party and the USSR" has returned. This heightening of the bitterness is omitted from the film.)

Third, and possibly unintentional, the last shot shows Prague students, during that Soviet invasion, painting a slogan on a wall: "Lenin, wake! They're going mad!" But if Lenin *had* awakened, then what?

Costa-Gavras has made a gripping, tough, intelligent film about an agony toward which the Western world has been moving for centuries. It's a tragic story; but, like other modern instances, the real tragedy is that the hero is his own antagonist, and the ground of the struggle is not virtue but irony.

Erratum: In the last issue of NR (Dec. 12) the title of Marge Piercy's book was incorrect. It should have read *Dance the Eagle to Sleep*.

"BUT HEATH *had yet another outrage in store. The screams had not yet died away when he announced that, yes, he was in fact going to supply some arms to South Africa, would do so, he said, because it was in England's long-range interest to do so. England's what? . . .*"

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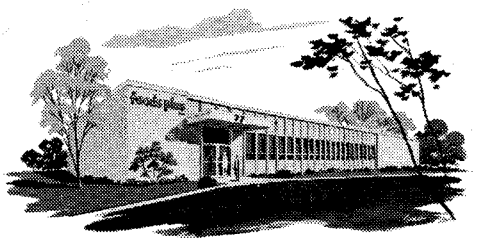

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